

From: Gilbert Ball
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 9:15am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Greetings.

I remember my surprise and shock that the Department of Justice had reached a settlement with Microsoft Corporation. After reading the details of the proposal, I feel it is little more than a slap on the hand.

I am not a fan for breaking up Microsoft. But I do feel that they actively sought out and eliminated any competition to their software products and services. Fortunately there have been a few holdouts that have survived to this day, but Microsoft stills holds almost all the cards.

Over the course of time I have used and supported many operating systems. Some of them still exist and thrive in their smaller markets. But I have watched Microsoft grow and overtake them all. Microsoft didn't do it because it had a better product. In fact, their rise can be summed up with this statement: Crummy product, great marketing. They can sell million dollar oceanfront property in Montana to a bum on the beach in Florida.

The browser wars are dead and Microsoft has won. But they didn't win fairly. They systematically suffocated Netscape by undercutting them by giving away Explorer, cutting off distribution channels and strong arming people into putting their software in the premier locations or installations.

Although Apple and Microsoft cozied up together in recent years, Apple has always been really at Microsoft's whim. Microsoft did have the best office product for the Macintosh platform. Without it, the Macintosh with whither and possibly fade away. One little implied threat that they would discontinue Office would definitely bring Apple to its senses and support Microsoft's other software packages over Microsoft's rivals. If I was Apple, it would get me shaking in my boots to lose the Microsoft Office package.

But back to the browsers for a second. I used to use Netscape. It was a superior product. I PAID for it because it was good. Then Microsoft came along with Internet Explorer. It was a piss poor product AND it was preinstalled with Windows. I didn't want it, I didn't like it. I continued to use Netscape. I chose Netscape because it was better, more stable, and had all the features I wanted. But as time went on and Explorer became more and more a part of the operating system, I had no choice.

I shake my head as I look at my desktop right now while typing this message.

I am running Microsoft Windows 2000, using Internet Explorer and Microsoft's Hotmail service. I used to run so many applications from

different vendors. But they are no longer there. And I wouldn't dare install Netscape on my system as it doesn't coexist with Microsoft products very well anymore. I am not sure if that is by Microsoft's design or the fact that Netscape has been beaten down so much, they cannot afford to make the superior product they used to create.

I urge you to reconsider your mild treatment of Microsoft. It is a MONOPOLY. They have used tactics that date back to the the likes of railroad monopolies. It was not acceptable then. It is not acceptable now.

We are in a capitalist, Democratic, society. We have freedom to choose where, what, when, how, and why on almost every aspect of our lives. Microsoft took away some of my freedoms. My freedom of choice was taken away. Frankly, that leaves a very bitter taste in my mouth. It is up to you to rectify the situation. You are the law and the guardians of what our forefathers and those after them have put into place. Please do the right thing and scrap this watered down agreement. It does no one in this country and the world any good except for Microsoft.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

-gilbert

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